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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to measure management styles in higher education doctoral institutions accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools as perceived by administrative employees. The survey population was the administrative employees, excluding the chief executive officer, of the 61 institutions listed by the SACS Commission on Colleges as members granting bachelor's, master's and doctor's degrees. A random sample of 614 administrative employees from 31 institutions were surveyed, and 353 usable responses were received. Respondents were compared to nonrespondents on vertical and horizontal positions within their organizations. A modified version of Likert's "Profile of Organizational Characteristics" was developed and used to measure the individual's perceptions of the sytle of management used at his institution. The form identified management variables in the areas of leadership, motivation, communication, interaction-influence processes, decisionmaking, goal setting, controls, and training. It provided a measure of the organization's management style as perceived by respondents on a system-1 to system-4 continuum. Most of the item means were in the system-3 (consultative) range; several other means for items occurred in the system-2 (benevolent/authoritative) range. Implications of the results are discussed. (SW)

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JUNE, 1978 VOLUME 10 NUMBER 3

ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES IN SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITIES

by Sidney A. Prewitt*

INTRODUCTION**

Industrial studies by Rensis Likert and his associates at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan have identified the human organizational variables that differentiate the more effective organization from the less effective organization. These variables can be used to define a distinct and consistent pattern of management.

Likert classified these patterns as Systems 1, 2, 3, or 4. The classification ranged on a continuum from System 1, a task oriented, highly structured authoritarian model, the least effective, to System 4, a participative mouel based on teamwork, mutual trust and confidence, the most effective. In between are System 2, a benevolent authoritarian style, and System 3, a consultative pattern of operation (Likert, 1967, p. 14).

The identification and measurement of key organizational factors are essential in Likert's management theory. He termed these factors as causal, intervening and end-result variables. They are defined briefly below:

> The "causal" variables are independent variables which determine the course of developments within an organization and the results achieved by the organization. These causal variables include only those independent variables which can be altered or changed by the organization and its management. Causal variables include the structure of the organization and management's policies, decisions, business and leadership strategies, skills, and behavior.
>
> The "intervening" variables reflect the internal state and health of the organization, e.g., the loyalties, attitudes, motivations, performance goals, and perceptions of all members and their collective capacity for effective interaction, communication and decision-making.
>
> The "end-result" variables are the dependent variables which reflect the achievements of the organization, such as productivity, cost, scrap loss, and earnings (Likert, 1967, pp. 26-29).

In discussing the importance of the causal and intervening variables, Likert provided the following explanation:

> End-result measurements provide after-the-fact information. They commonly reveal problems when it is too late to take corrective action. End-result measurements, moreover, usually provide neither adequate information about the causes of the undesired results nor the best clues to guide decisions to solve them or prevent them.
>
> Only the causal and intervening variables provide information correctly describing the current internal state of the organization as a human enterprise. Especially important are the causal variables, which provide data enabling one to predict with reasonable accuracy the future trends in the organization (Likert, 1967, p. 130).

The importance of these factors is intensified for educational organizations where there is little agreement on the identification and measurement of the end-result variables. However, if the causal and intervening variables are accepted as accurate predictors of future institutional trends, then this disagreement becomes immaterial. An institution managed by System 4 concepts, "confident that the desired end-results will be achieved, [will use] the causal and intervening variables to build" a human organization that can achieve any desired objective (Likert, 1967, p. 130).

In order to measure these variables and thus classify the system of management, System 1, 2, 3, or 4, used by an organization, Likert devised a scale called "Profile Organizational Characteristics" (Likert, 1967, pp. 197-211). He established the reliability and validity of the scale in non-educational settings during several years of research (Likert, 1967, pp. 116-123). The scale has subsequently gained wide acceptance as an instrument for measuring changes in institutions as a result of various programs (Armenakis, 1975, pp. 101-102).

Likert reviewed several research studies which showed that industrial organizations with participative patterns of management leadership can achieve higher performance than the average business operation. He summarized the studies as follows: "Those firms or plants where System 4 is used show high productivity, low scrap loss, low costs, favorable attitudes, and excellent labor relations" (Likert, 1967, p. 46). And a number of individual studies, particularly doctoral dissertations, have provided evidence that the basic organizational factors are similarly associated with the

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differences in school operations. Other individuals have shown that a participative pattern of management is as effective in educational institutions as it is in business organizations (Likert, 1967).

These studies support Likert's contention that System 4 is as effective in higher education institutions as it is in business organizations. Therefore, improvement in the causal and intervening variables should result in a corresponding improvement in the end-result variables. An adoption of System 4 as a style of management should sustain higher education organizations and allow them to more effectively attain their goals.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Recent legislative appropriations for state supported colleges and universities have not provided any substantial increases for current operating budgets. In fact, with growing clamor from other agencies and constituencies, the state's expenditure pies are being pared into even thinner slices in order to meet insistent demands for new services. As a result, some of the recent appropriations to higher education have actually resulted in smaller operating budgets. In the private sector the story is similar. The depressed investment market and a reluctance to be priced out of competition for students have placed great strains on management's ability to finance their ongoing programs (Bowen, 1975, pp. 149-150). The tightened budgets, acerbated by unchecked inflation, require decisions to limit recruitment of new personnel and to seek other means for over all reduction of staff. Clearly then, the critical task for college management today is the imperative to generate maximum results from the personnel currently on the payrolls.

Research studies have shown that a major factor affecting employee effectiveness is the style of management of the organization's administrators; but, college and university administrators have traditionally resisted efforts to study these styles. However, in this period of varying enrollments and financial and personnel crises, these styles need to be examined. In order to improve its management and effectiveness, it is necessary to know more about higher education as a human enterprise.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to measure management styles in higher education doctoral institutions accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools as perceived by administrative employees.

POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population of the survey was the administrative employees, excluding the chief-executive officer, of the 61 institutions listed by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools as members granting bachelor's, master's, and doctor's degrees (SACS, 1976, pp. 45-46). Samples were limited to administrative employees. Price defined administrative employees as those "full-time career members of a social system who perform primarily the activities that indirectly contribute to its primary output (Price, 1972, p. 19). For the purpose of this study, they included those non-faculty employees listed in the institution's most recent general catalog, excluding the chief executive officer.

A group of 31 institutions, representing a 50.8 percent sample, was randomly selected. From the latest general catalog of these institutions, 20 of the administrative employees from each institution were randomly selected to make up the survey sample. Two catalogs did not list as many as 20 administrative employees. In these cases, all listed were included. These procedures resulted in a random sample of 614 administrative employees.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

After the individuals to be surveyed had been selected, their names, titles, business addresses and the numerical codes identifying their institutions were keypunched into Hollerith cards and the keypunching verified. In order to identify respondents and to preclude needless subsequent mailings to them, but at the same time assure their anonymity, a list of unique random numbers was generated by computer. The DEC-System 10 computer at The University of Mississippi was used to accomplish this task. Each individual's cards were sequentially assigned one of these numbers and the list was destroyed. This number and the institutional code were printed via computer on mailing labels adjacent to the corresponding labels with the individual's name and business address. The number and code were placed on the instruction page of the packet mailed to the individual. When a response to that number was received, the name and address card corresponding to that number was destroyed. This removed the possibility of identifying individual respondents, but allowed identification of respondents' institutions via the code.

A pilot study to test the instrument and accompanying instructions was conducted at one of the 31 selected institutions during the month of May, 1977. No significiant modifications were indicated in the instrument or instructions. A packet was mailed to all selected individuals, except those who responded to the pilot study on May 30, 1977. Included in each packet were a cover letter, instructions for completing the instruments, the two instruments, and a prepaid business reply envelope. The cover letter explained the purpose of the study, assured the individuals of their anonymity, and offered them a summary of the results. Subsequent mailings were sent to non-respondents on June 20 and July 13, 1977.

Of the 614 individuals surveyed, 379 responses were received. Eighteen of the responses were received indicating that the individual addressed had resigned or retired; and two forms were not used due to inability to identify the institution. This resulted in a usable response of 353 instruments which represented 57.5 percent of the total sample.

Respondents were compared to non-respondents on vertical and horizontal positions within their organizations. Prior to mailing packets the entire sample was summarized by horizontal position or functional responsibility [Academic Affairs (180), Student Affairs (115), Service Function (91), Business Affairs (53), Research/Library (47), or Central Administration (128)]; and by vertical position or level [Vice-President (70), Dean (236), Department Director (275), or Assistant to Dean or Director (33)]. Job titles were used in this classification. The horizontal classification was consistent throughout all institutions, but the vertical position varied from institution to institution. For example, the Dean of Students was always classified in Student Affairs for horizontal position but could be classified at Vice-President's level or Dean's level, depending on institutional structure.

TABLE 1

Comparison of Respondents Versus Non-Respondents on Functional Responsibility

Functional Responsibility	Respondent	Non-Respondent	Total
Academic	93	87	180
Student	72	43	115
Services	57	34	91
Central Administration	74	54	128
Business	25	28	53
Library or Research	32	15	47
Totals	353	261	614

In terms of the vertical hierarchial level within their institutions, 40 respondents were identified at the vice-president's level, 135 at the dean's level, 160 at the department director's level, and 18 at the assistant to the dean's or director's level. Comparison of respondents versus non-respondents by vertical level is presented in Table 2. A Chi-Square Test of Independence did not show any significant ($p = .05$) difference between respondents and non-respondents ($x^2 = 0.18$).

At the conclusion of the period for respondents to return instruments, non-respondents were summarized according to the same procedures. By subtracting non-respondents from the total sample, the classification of respondents was obtained, thus protecting their anonymity.

The respondents' functional responsibilities were 93 in academic affairs, 72 in student affairs, 57 in service functions, 25 in business affairs, and 32 in library or research functions. Comparison of respondents versus non-respondents on functional responsibility is displayed in Table 1. A Chi-Square Test of Independence did not show any significant ($p = .05$) difference between respondents and non-respondents ($x^2 = 9.95$).

Table 2

Comparison of Respondents Versus Non-Respondents on Organizational Levels

Organizational Level	Respondent	Non-Respondent	Total
Vice-President	40	30	70
Dean	135	101	236
Department Director	160	115	275
Assistant to Dean or Director	18	15	33
Totals	353	261	614

Likert's Profile of Organizational Characteristics

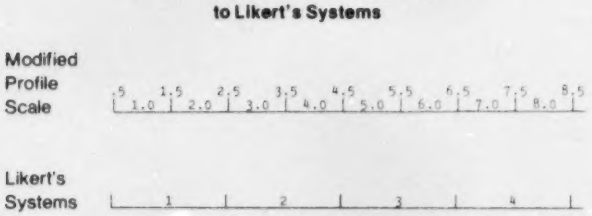
With the consent of Rensis Likert and the McGraw-Hill Book Company, a modified version of Likert's "Profile of Organizational Characteristics" was developed and used to measure the individual's perceptions of the style of management used at his institution. The modified form was a shorter version of the full instrument—20 items versus 51 items. It identified management variables in the areas of leadership, motivation, communication, interaction-influence processes, decision making, goal setting, controls, and training; and it provided a measure of the organization's management style as perceived by respondents on a System 1 to System 4 continuum.

Modifications for the shorter version of the form were suggested by researchers in other studies and also by Dr. Likert (Wheatley, 1971, and Likert, 1977). Changes included shortening the questions and rewording them for college administrators, putting all items in a left-to-right System 1 to System 4 continuum (the full form randomly reversed 23 items) and restricting the choices from 20 items to eight items to ease the scoring and data analysis.

The instrument was scored by using a range of .5 to 8.5 for each of the 20 items. All System 1 responses were on the left or low end of the scale; all System 4 responses were on the right or high end of the scale. The relationship of the scale to Likert's Systems is displayed in Figure 1. A System 1 score would be between .50 and 2.49; a System 2 score between 2.50 and 4.49; a System 3 score between 4.50 and 6.49; and a System 4 score between 6.50 and 8.50.

Figure 1

Relationship of Modified Profile Scale to Likert's Systems



In previous studies, directions to respondents for completing the profile have varied. Most researchers have instructed the rater to specify his perceptions as to his organization's present state with a symbol, usually an "N" for "Now." Then, by use of a different symbol, usually an "L" for "Like," the rater was asked to specify the system he would like his organization to achieve.

This discrimination between the perception of current state and the idealization of a preferred state is essential. It adds to the objectivity, and thus to the validity, of the instrument. It avoids the mixing of the respondent's judgments with his preferences. For this reason, respondents in this study were asked to indicate both their current perceptions and their concepts of desired status on the profile, even though only the former was relevant to the objectives of the study.

If only one choice per item was indicated, such as a single check-mark or an "X," the researcher assumed it referred to the current status of the organization. Some respondents circled the System 1, 2, 3, or 4 wording above the scale; these were scored as 1.5, 3.5, 5.5, or 7.5, respectively. Any item omitted by a respondent was assigned a score equal to the mean of all his responses. For each individual the mean of his responses to the 20 items on the profile was calculated. This mean score represented the individual's perception of his institution's style of management.

Reliability

Previous researchers reported the full form's split-half, corrected reliability coefficient to be between + .90 and + .99. This indicated that between one to ten percent of the variation in the measurements was attributed to error; the remaining variability, 90 to 99 percent, was attributed to variation in true score (Likert, 1967, p. 122). The Pearson Product moment coefficient between the modified form's odd items (1, 3, . . ., 19) and even items (2, 4, . . ., 20) was + .89. Correction by the Spearman-Brown formula resulted in an internal reliability coefficient of + .94. This indicated that 94 percent of the variability in the instrument was accounted for by the true score and only six percent was relegated to error.

Table 3

Sample Means, Standard Deviations and Range of Institutional Means on Individual Items of the Modified Profile of Organizational Characteristics

Item Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	Institutional Means Minimum	Institutional Means Maximum
1	4.986	1.280	3.950	5.611
2	5.272	1.325	4.700	6.000
3	4.422	1.461	2.773	5.231
4	5.389	1.920	3.000	6.625
5	4.083	1.804	2.727	5.821
6	5.090	1.243	3.318	5.767
7	5.336	1.401	4.091	6.321
8	4.813	1.691	3.000	5.864
9	4.979	1.834	3.227	6.346
10	4.851	1.582	2.955	5.611
11	5.672	1.229	4.409	6.464
12	5.647	1.272	4.818	6.346
13	5.511	1.294	4.045	6.286
14	5.407	1.369	4.182	6.056
15	4.233	1.758	2.727	5.250
16	4.526	1.762	2.818	6.000
17	4.838	1.725	3.455	5.778
18	4.345	1.699	3.300	5.250
19	5.235	1.266	4.091	6.250
20	3.541	1.487	2.318	5.214

FINDINGS

Profile Items. The mean and standard deviation for each profile item and the range of the mean score for each of the 31 institutions are presented in Table 3. Most of the item means occurred in the System 3—Consultative—range. Items 3, 5, 15, 18, and 20 occurred in the System 2—Benevolent-Authoritative—range. Institutional means ranged from System 1—Exploitative-Authoritative—for item 20, to System 4—Participative group—for item 4.

The first three items were concerned with the leadership processes used by an institution. Item one asked the question: "How much confidence and trust is shown in subordinates by superiors?" The mean score on this item was 4.986. This was within the System 3 range, which indicated that a "substantial amount" of trust and confidence is shown. Institutional means fell within the System 2, "some" confidence and trust, and the System 3 range.

The mean score for item two was 5.272, which was within the System 3 range. This indicated that subordinates felt "quite free" to talk to superiors about their jobs. All institutional means were of the System 3 magnitude.

Item three asked the question: "How often are subordinates' ideas sought and used constructively?" The item's mean score was within the System 2 range (4.422). This indicated that the subordinates' ideas were "sometimes" sought and used. Institutional means fell within the System 2 and System 3, "usually" sought and used, span.

The next four items were concerned with the type of motivation used by an institution. Item four had a mean score of 5.389, which was within the System 3 range. This indicated that rewards were the predominate stimulus used to motivate employees, with punishment or group involvement sometimes being used. Institutional means varied between the System 2 range, no group involvement, to the System 4 range, no punishment.

Item five's mean fell within the System 2 range (4.083). This indicated that only the "top and middle" level administrators felt responsibility for achieving their institution's goals. Institutional means were within the System 2 or System 3, "substantial proportion of personnel" felt responsibility, span.

The sixth item asked the question: "What is the prevalent attitude of the staff toward superiors, peers, and subordinates?" The mean for this item was 5.090, which was within the System 3 range. This indicated that there is some competition and condescension among the staff, but cooperation is predominant. Institutional means were in System 2, "subservience, competition, and condescension," or System 3 magnitudes.

The last item, concerned with the motivational forces within an institution, was item seven. This item's mean fell in the System 3 range (5.336). This indicated that administrators' attitudes ranged from dissatisfied to moderately highly satisfied in regards to staff membership, supervision, and personal achievement. Institutional mean scores were either of System 2, "dissatisfaction to moderate satisfaction," or System 3 magnitudes.

The next five questions were concerned with the communication processes of an institution. Item eight's mean score was 4.813. This was within the System 3 range. The response to this question indicated that there were "quite a bit" of interaction and communication aimed at achieving institutional goals. Institutional means ranged between System 2, "little" interaction and communication, and System 3.

The mean score for item nine was within the System 3 range (4.979). This indicated that the usual flow of information was both from superior to subordinate and from subordinate to superior. Institutional means were within either the System 2, mostly superior to subordinate, range or System 3 range.

Question ten asked the question: "How much information do superiors pass on to subordinates?" The mean score was 4.851. This was within the System 3 range. It indicated that "information needed and answers to most questions" were provided. Institutional means were either within System 2, "only that [information] which [the] superior feels subordinates need," or System 3.

Item eleven had the highest mean score of all 20 items, 5.672. This score was within the System 3 range. It indicated that the accuracy and adequacy of the information provided superiors was "fair to good." Institutional means ranged from System 2, "poor, what Boss wants to hear," to System 3.

The last question, item 12, concerning organizational communication was concerned with the accuracy and adequacy of peer communication. Its mean score was 5.647, which was within the System 3 range. This indicated there was "fair to good" peer communication. Institutional means were all of the System 3 magnitude.

Questions 13 and 14 were concerned with the interaction-influence processes of an organization. Question thirteen's mean score was 5.511. This was within the System 3 range. It indicated there was a "moderate amount" of cooperative teamwork witin the institutions. Institutional means were either at the System 2, "relatively little" cooperative teamwork, or in the System 3 span.

Item fourteen asked the question: "To what extent can subordinates influence the goals, methods, and activities of their subordinates?" The mean score for this item was 5.407. This was within the System 3 range and indicated that subordinates could exert "a moderate amount" of influence. Institutional means extended between the System 2, "little, except through [the] 'Informal Organization,' " and System 3 span.

The next two questions were concerned with the decision-making processes of an institution. Question fifteen explored the institutional level at which decisions were formally made. Its mean score was within the System 2 range (4.233). This indicated that policy decisions were made at the top level of the institutions, but there was "some delegation." Institutional means ranged from the System 2 to System 3, "broad policy at top, specific decisions at lower levels," magnitudes.

Item sixteen's mean score was 4.526, which was within the System 3 range. This score indicated that much of the technical and professional knowledge available on all levels was used in institutional decision-making. Institutional mean scores were of either the System 2, much of technical and professional knowledge "available in higher and middle levels," or the System 3 range.

Question seventeen was concerned with how institutional goals were established. Its mean score was within the System 3 range, 4.838. This score indicated that after a discussion with subordinates, the goals were established. Institutional mean scores ranged between System 2, "orders issued," with a possible opportunity for comment, to System 3.

The next two items were concerned with the control processes of an institution. Item eighteen asked the question: "At what level are the review and control functions concentrated?" Its mean score was 4.345. This was within the System 2 range. This score indicated that the review and control functions were mostly at the top, with some delegation. Institutional mean scores were within System 2 and System 3, "moderate delegation throughout" the institution, range.

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Question nineteen concerned the opposition or support of the "Informal Organization" toward institutional goals. The item's mean score was within the System 3 range (5.235). This score suggested that the "Informal Organization" may either support or partially resist institutional goals. Institutional means were within either the System 2, "partially resist," or the System 3 range.

The final item was concerned with the amount of desired management training provided to administrators. The item's mean score was the lowest of the 20 items, 3.541. It was within the System 2 range, which indicated that "some" desired management training had been provided. Institutional means varied between System 1, no desired management training provided, and System 3, "quite a bit" of desired management training provided.

Institutional Management Style. For each individual, the mean of his responses on the 20 profile items was calculated. This mean score represented the individual's perception of his institution's management style. The mean score for the 353 respondents was 4.908. This was within the System 3—Consultative range. Presented in Table 4 are the means and standard deviations of the management styles for the 31 institutions. Most of the means for the 31 sample institutions were within the System 3 range. Five institutional means were in the System 2—Benevolent-Authoritative—range. Institution 31 had the highest mean score, 5.583. Institution 11 had the lowest mean score, 3.594.

Table 4

Institutional Profile Means and Standard Deviations

Institution	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	4.725	1.074
2	5.011	1.270
3	5.286	1.140
4	4.519	0.780
5	5.533	0.815
6	5.130	0.876
7	4.624	1.296
8	5.213	0.600
9	4.958	0.792
10	4.715	1.405
11	3.594	1.025
12	5.192	0.989
13	4.949	1.108
14	5.151	0.870
15	4.331	1.218
16	4.526	1.046
17	5.471	0.664
18	5.038	0.986
19	4.362	1.357
20	5.241	1.457
21	4.572	1.136
22	4.786	0.984
23	5.130	0.862
24	5.100	0.875
25	4.864	0.783
26	4.251	1.064
27	5.142	0.837
28	5.220	1.513
29	4.487	1.355
30	4.813	0.814
31	5.583	0.927
All	4.908	1.090

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to measure management styles in higher education doctoral institutions as perceived by administrative employees. The population of the survey was the administrative employees of the 61 institutions listed by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools as members granting bachelor's, master's, and doctor's degrees. A random sample of 31 institutions was selected. From the latest general catalog of these institutions, 20 administrative employees from each institution were randomly selected to make up the survey sample. These procedures resulted in a sample size of 614 administrative employees.

During the months of May, June, and July, 1977, the 614 administrators were surveyed via a small questionnaire as to their perceptions of the management style used at their institution. Of the 379 responses received, 353 instruments were usable. This represented a 57.5 usuable return. Non-respondents did not deviate from respondents on horizontal or vertical position within their institution.

A modified version of Likert's "Profile of Organizational Characteristics" was used to measure the individual's perceptions of the style of management used at his institution. It identified management variables in the areas of leadership, motivation, communication, interaction-influence processes, decision making, goal setting, controls, and training. The means and standard deviations for each of the 20 items were presented in Table 3. Most of the item means were in the System 3—Consultative—range. The means for items 3, 4, 15, 18, and 20 occurred in the System 2—Benevolent-Authoritative—range.

Of the eight management variables previously mentioned, six had means in the System 3 range. The items concerning the decision-making processes, items 15 and 16, of an institution were in System 2, or at the low end of the System 3 range. This would seem to indicate that top level university administrators are making most of the policy decisions and are not using the expertise available in their institutions.

Item 20 was concerned with the desired management training provided administrators. The low mean for this item, 3.541, indicated a strong desire for some type of management training for university administrators.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that organizational development or management training efforts in higher education, such as those proposed by Lahti (1970) and Likert (1967, pp. 128-145), be further implemented.

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